Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/425874037

Downloaded on Mar 29, 2024

8 jazz

MIRABASSI "For me, 'being' is to be surrounded by beauty"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

"Listen, 'avant garde' is a dead word that belongs to a definite period in the history of human thought, pre-World War II until the 1970s. "But today, it's a romantic concept, created by the press. I've heard incredible phrases, like, 'melody is fascist' - what the hell are you saying? Melody is music - listen to Johnny Hodges; I rest my case.

"The real problem in world music is that putting funky drums on top of an Indian raga doesn't create anything, it amounts to a lack of respect," Mirabassi says. "It's not where a culture meets - it's a point where a culture breaks, where people in the middle of the Sahara drink Coca-Cola. It's not something of freedom, it's the beginning of the end."

In a globalized world, Mirabassi basks in Perugia's provincialism.

"Before being a musician, I'm a human being. My goal is to make my life as good as I can. Music is necessary in this process, but it's not the only thing.

"For me, 'being' is to be surrounded by beauty. That's what defines quality of life to me. It starts at home - surrounded by my wife and child, my stove, and thousands of records and hundreds of books. I need to look outside my big window and see nature, birds, squirrels jumping in the trees. The air is good, no awful noises when I get up. With the travelling involved in the job I do, I need to have this beautiful place to come back to. A few years ago, you had to be in Roma or Milano, because everything was happening there. With the Internet, I can live in the country, seven kilometres from small medieval Perugia, yet big enough for concerts and CD shops, and Italy's biggest jazz festival. That's what globalization means to me. I can have a quality artistic profile and my own quality of life." He laughs. "Maybe it's a method of laziness, but I like it."

He leans forward, eyes widening: "If you have time to think about beauty in your daily life, then you become open to all kinds of possibilities in the outside world. I don't think a musician is so interesting if the only thing he can talk about is music. The artist needs to be free enough in their mind to just look and listen.

"Fellini is important for us because he gave us a huge storytelling gift. He worked very hard to develop the tools to give us a vision of what he was seeing. All so that we, the audience, gets to live one more life - his life. This is art for me.

"I love listening to Miles or Clifford Brown or Lee Morgan or Fats Navarro, because these players were not 'taking care of a tradition' - they were experimenting with new things at the moment. For me, it makes no sense making music without taking risks, because it's from the risks that you find the deepest emotions. Even if in taking risks you often fall down, that's a rule of the game. No risk, no masterwork. As an artist, I'm looking for someone who's ahead of me taking risks.

"I like refinement. Art refines. But you have to dig deep to reap the benefits. So we musicians spend our lives trying to do simple things with the utmost refinement. What I want to communicate is, I think, very joyful - the little details in the playing, the interpretation, concentration, dynamic counterpoint, everything in balance, or so we hope. We get great gratification from this."

But back to globalization, and eternal café debates. One way to combat a global cultural monolith, Mirabassi suggests, is "to be specific."

"It's like food, and the good life. If you come to Perugia, you have the opportunity to taste things that are made only here. It's a matter of ingredients. I want to use mine. I don't know if they're absolutely the best, but they're absolutely necessary to what I'm doing in music, and life."

Graffiando Vento, with Gabriele Mirabassi and Guinga, is at the Cabaret du Musée Juste pour rire on July 5 at 7 p.m. Tickets costs $22.50.

rodriguez.music@gmail.com

Copyright © 2024 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.

Powered by Newspapers.com